(b) if so, the details of progress made by Government in this regard;

(c) whether this programme is being implemented successfully and if not, what are the difficulties Government is facing therefor; and

(d) what is the target for the next fiscal year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF MINISTER OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR): (a) An Outline Plan was prepared by the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources for creating energy security in villages through biomass. In the National Conference on Renewable energy for Rural Areas organized by the Ministry in July, 2004, it was stated that the Ministry would consider one village energy project in every district and a beginning would be made by setting up pilot projects in a few selected villages.

(b) and (c) 24 test projects were taken up last year in three States, *viz.,* 11 in Madhya Pradesh, 6 in Rajasthan and 7 in West Bengal. In these projects the total energy requirements including cooking, lighting and motive power will be met through the energy production systems using locally available biomass resources, with participation of the local community. The first test project in an adivasi village in BetuI district of Madhya Pradesh has been implemented successfully. A total of 100 test projects are planned upto the end of March, 2006.

(d) During 2006-07, it is envisaged to take up another 100 test projects on village energy security indifferent States.

Training facilities to Singapore Airforce at Kalaikunda Airbase

2322. SHRI THENNALA G BALAKRISHNA PILLAI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to lend training facilities to Singapore Airforce at Kalaikunda Airbase of the IAF;

(b) what is the duration of the proposed training exercise by the Singapore Airforce, whether IAF will provide all logistic, administrative and maintenance support to Singapore Airforce;

(c) whether the visiting Aircrew will be operating their F-16s; and

(d) if so, whether India has any familiarity with such aircrafts to lend logistics support?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Joint Exercise between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) has been planned at Air Force Station, Kalaikunda, in January 2006. The duration of the planned Joint Exercise between the IAF and the RSAF is three weeks. The IAF will be providing logistic and administrative support on payment basis to the RSAF detachment.

(c) and (d) The visiting Aircrew will be operating F-16 aircraft. These aircraft were operated by RSAF at Gwalior during the Joint Exercise in 2004. Recently the United States Air Force (USAF) operated F-16 aircraft in Kalaikunda in November 2005, as well.

Abandonment of HS-748 Avro Aircrafts

2323. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has sought logistic support and lease of PC-3 Maritime Patrol Aircraft from the US in order to phase out the soviet Built IL-38s which are at their fag end of fatigue and operational service life;

(b) whether India has abandoned the prestigious HS-748 Avro aircrafts in the wake of serious setback resulting from a crash of Avro near Arakkonam in Tamil Nadu in 1999; and

(c) if not, whether DRDO is still working on an indigenous Airborne Early Warning System?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The United States has indicated the availability of two PC-3 Maritime Patrol aircraft on lease. However, no formal offer has been received in this regard. There is no proposal to replace IL-38 aircraft of Navy.

(b) and (c) Based on the experience gained and technology developed on the previous programme on Avro Aircraft, a new programme for development of Airborne Early Warning and Control system was approved by the Government in October, 2004.